

VZCZCXYZ0007
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHMU #1079/01 3161558
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 121557Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0112
INFO WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 001079

SIPDIS
DEPT FOR WHA/CEN KRAAIMOORE
DEPT FOR INR/IAA ARCHULETA
DEPT FOR G/TIP MFERRI
DEPT FOR DRL MAGGIO
STATE FOR USAID
PASS TO MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/11/12
TAGS: PHUM SOCI KWMN PGOV NU
SUBJECT: GENDER EQUALITY, DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN NICARAGUA

REF: MANAGUA 1041; MANAGUA 794

CLASSIFIED BY: Robert J. Callahan, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: The September rape case of a government employee by her co-workers and the irregularities in the subsequent police investigation

TREND TOWARDS POLICE NEGLIGENCE

2. (SBU) The case of the alleged rape of an employee for Nicaraguan Migration Agency (DGME) by her colleague, a militant of the FSLN, has brought women's issues to the forefront of public consciousness. The alleged rape victim told reporters that on July 25 she was invited by her supervisor to join her male co-workers one evening and that she would be given a ride home later that night. However, when the victim asked to be driven home, her co-workers drove her instead to a gas station, where she protested vigorously and was slapped and beaten by them. The victim recalls that National Nicaraguan Police (NNP) officers at the gas station did not respond, despite her cries for help. The victim was drugged and forced back into the car where she was threatened by her co-worker that he would kill her and her family if she told anyone about the incident; adding that even if she said anything about it, his word would be believed against hers. The victim claims she was raped repeatedly throughout the night before being dropped off in front of the Antonio Lenin Fonseca Hospital in Managua.

3. (SBU) At the Fonseca hospital the victim was treated, and later informed that in addition to her injuries, she was pregnant and had contracted a venereal disease. While the victim was still recovering in the hospital, one of the alleged rapists returned to threaten her against pressing any charges. The victim filed criminal charges against the perpetrators and submitted her clothing as evidence. However, 45 days after filing charges police had taken no action and her alleged aggressors continued working (DGME officials told reporters that "they cannot be dismissed from their jobs"). The alleged FSLN militant rapist and his accomplice have not been questioned by police. The victim told police that her aggressors still had her jacket and cell phone, but there had been no effort to return these items. Further, the clothes she submitted as evidence had not been examined properly by police. Police Chief Aminta Granera responded to media inquiries about the case that "an investigation was on-going."

GOVERNMENT ACTION MIXED SIGNALS

4. (SBU) Media reported that on July 27, Minister of Government Ana Isabel Morales, an FSLN militant to whom DGME reports (and rumored to be t

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CONTINUES

5. (U) This high-profile case has recently fueled the public discourse on gender domestic and sexual violence issues to which media have dedicated intense coverage of late. Local media reported that within the first eight months of 2009, 45 women had been murdered, 25 of them at the hands of their partners. Among the women killed in 2009 was police sub-commissioner and head of the women's commissariat of the area of Diriomo, Luz Mariana Lezama Suazo, who was raped and then killed by her domestic partner. Media estimate an average of 10 rapes are reported every day and six murders of women occur per month - a statistic higher than 2008 estimates. Violence against women has long been linked to Nicaragua's "machista" culture; however, the trend has been exacerbated by the NNP and judiciary authorities' inefficiency in responding to cases of domestic violence. The GON is not heading any major new campaigns to address this issue and there are complaints that many reported cases are ignored. Moreover, others complain that laws and protocols are not followed. NGOs complain that domestic violence is treated less severely than violence outside of the home.

6. (U) Statistics on domestic violence demonstrate that there has been a 103 percent increase in the number of reported cases of domestic violence since 2008. Beginning in 2007, the NNP has established 35 women's commissariats throughout the country to better support women and children victims of domestic violence. Within the first 6 months of 2009, approximately 65,000 women reportedly suffered some form of domestic violence; yet, of these only 15,000 had filed complaints against their aggressors. Last year the Supreme Court of Justice's Institute of Forensic Medicine reported 11,184 total cases of domestic violence. Media report that it is unclear whether there is an actual increase in the number of cases of domestic violence or victims are more inclined to report violence. [NOTE: In conversations with NGOs and NNP, we were told that there is an increase in both domestic violence and reporting; it is generally believed that recent economic strains and rising male unemployment has led to an increase in domestic violence. END NOTE]

17. (U) Local magistrate Ligia Molina, who recently hosted the Public Forum on Gender, commented that while gender-based discrimination has dec

COMMENT

18. (C) The recent rape case of a DGME employee by her colleagues and the subsequent NNP mismanagement of the investigation is emblematic of the growing trends of violence against women and also exposes the current government's poor record when it comes to defending women. There is growing concern that violence against women in Nicaragua is not being identified as a serious human rights issue by the Ortega government. Further, the pervasiveness of domestic violence, homicide, rape and the general abuse of women is of increasing concern due to its rise within the last year and the fact that it is underreported. In addition, victims who attempt to seek justice through police or judicial systems are met with incompetence and inaction. Finally, corruption, nepotism, and party affiliation fuel negligence within the police and judiciary systems, preventing the expedient prosecution of offenders.

CALLAHAN